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ment. Now, what is being done? First, there are two points, as I take it, in this whole subject. One is the knowledge of books, as Mr Dana has well put it; or, in the words of Carlyle, which you all remember, "After all, all that an institution of learning can teach is reading in all manner of science." Ability to read in all languages, in all literature and in all the sciences is, after all, all that the educational system can give.

The second point is the knowledge as to how to use books and get at books. But, of course, as Dr Richardson has said, the university professor is charged with the task of giving to the students the knowledge of books. But the great majority of instructors are totally unable to give students any knowledge of the use of books. We have yet to arrive at the period when the specialist knows, except from his hard, long experience in his own field, how to get at his materials. He doesn't know enough about the laws of bibliography to teach students how to get at books in the best way. The work that is being done in a general way by the librarians in some places is more than is shown by Mr Dana's table. We cannot compel all the students to come to even one introductory lecture, much less to take a number of lectures. We do give courses, in common with all the other departments of the university, that students may elect and in which they may do systematic work, but the number who realize their need for this kind of instruction is small and the courses are attended by a few only. The teachers of the universities are growing more and more—I say this because I judge my experience to be common to others—growing more and more to give systematic instruction in the use of books in their own fields. I know that with a number of our professors at Cornell the work is divided in this way,—the introductory bibliographic work is left to the librarian, and the special bibliographic work is picked up where the librarian leaves off and is carried on through the literature of the various subjects. There are other cases where the librarian has opportunity to go out and meet whole classes, like a class in economics, for in-

stance, with 700 students, and give them, in a single hour to be sure, some fundamental principles of the use of books, not alone in connection with their own subject, but in connection with books in general. I mention these merely as incidental methods which are being pursued here and there. Under present circumstances they represent about all that we are able to do.

Now, there is one thing I want to say in closing. During my career in meeting students, I have noticed a marked change in the students that come up to the University, a decided change between those who came to me ten years ago and those who come to me now. The change is not so great as I wish it might be, but it is hopeful. I remember the time when students came to the University knowing absolutely nothing about any feature of the library, even the simplest. They didn't know the arrangement of a dictionary catalog; sometimes they didn't know the order by the letters of the alphabet; but that is quite aside from this. Today I find a goodly number of students who come to us, who have had library training. I say library training, training in the use of libraries,—public libraries or school libraries; and I find occasionally nowadays, a student with a great deal of information about the catalog and the indexes which is very encouraging. And it seems to me that in this problem, as in a great many other library problems, we must work on the rising generations before we are going to see very great progress; and the work that can be done in the public libraries and preparatory school libraries, in fitting students who come to the universities to help themselves and to use intelligently the helps they find there, is very great.

**THE PRESIDENT:** We have still one paper more to hear this morning, and since we were so late beginning, we shall have to discontinue the discussion of this very interesting subject. We shall now hear **MR CHALMERS HADLEY on the**

#### **TREND OF LIBRARY COMMISSION WORK**

The comparative newness of library

commission work makes any estimate of its tendencies of little value, for thus far its daily demands have called for immediate action rather than for reflection regarding the future.

The question of "trend of library commission work" assumes added interest when considered with the assertions of some library workers, that library commissions are of a temporary nature, with their end already in view. Some idea of discontinuance may be given by the name "commission," which sometimes has designated bodies appointed to superintend some temporary activity. Whatever the opinion of others may be, to commission workers, burdened with duties, and with new ones constantly needing attention, any assertion of temporariness receives little consideration; for the commission's advisory work with libraries alone, seems limited only by the resourcefulness of the commission itself. Should it cease to operate in any state, it would probably be because a comparison of work to be done with the ridiculously small appropriation frequently made with which to do it would indicate the futility of any possible effort.

The original idea of commission work seemed to be, primarily, the establishment of new public libraries; but while libraries established have shown a marvelous increase in number, especially in commission states, this is only one of many activities. If commissions exist simply to increase the number of public libraries, then library commissions may well consider themselves of temporary existence, for the advent of every new library would toll a day less of official and professional life.

In the state of Massachusetts there is a library in every town. In Wisconsin, there is not a city of more than 3,000 inhabitants without a library, and only five cities exceeding 2,000 people without such an institution. Of 88 cities in Indiana, 69 have public libraries, and similar conditions exist in many other states. But the cessation of library commission work with the establishment of public libraries would be nearly as blameworthy as the

desertion of a new born babe by a supposedly interested parent.

With public opinion and the assistance of Mr Carnegie's money, the establishment of libraries in a new field is comparatively easy work. In fact, the commission worker frequently has to play the role of conservative when he detects an emotionalism in a public library campaign akin to that in a camp-meeting revival; for unless the situation be handled in a calm, professional way, the results may be as unfortunate to the library as they sometimes are to the repentant but lonesome sinner who has been swept to unsupportable heights.

One unsuccessful library frequently will attract more public attention and comment than six successful ones. Every library which fails in its mission is a stumbling block to library development in general, and if a commission considers its work ended with the establishment of libraries alone, in my opinion it should move with exceeding care in this field of activity.

An important step in library commission, or library extension development, was taken in 1893 when the State of New York saw the possibilities of traveling libraries with sufficient clearness to provide books for communities lacking library advantages; and most if not all states which have library commissions or extension departments now send out these libraries. Not only are they lent for the personal use of readers, but they are used as entering wedges for the establishment of tax supported public libraries in communities able to continue them.

The period following 1893 was the formative one, the blocking-out stage in commission activities, and the work showed a decided change. A glimpse into the future seemed to stir most commissions alike, and in addition to the supervision of traveling libraries and the establishment of new public libraries, the work began to be of more definite service to public libraries already in operation. It soon included in its activities the training of library workers through summer library schools and institutes, and the establish-

ment of clearing houses for periodicals and numerous other interests.

For the last five years, commission work, even in widely separated states, has tended toward greater uniformity. Local conditions will always exist, but the scope and methods of work, whether in charge of a commission, the state library or some other special department, have been getting more alike. Any difference in scope is due chiefly to the size of appropriations for carrying on the work.

It is this agreement in method which shows the present trend of the work. Whether conscious of a trend or not, commissions will meet it if they successfully do the work of every day; for the trend comes in meeting the needs of libraries and is not a direction given the work from the commission office itself. No radical change is imminent, for the trend is simply along the line of increased usefulness through greater co-operation.

Co-operation is no new word in commission work. For several years there has been sufficient co-operation between the various states for the exchange of benefits among the library commissions. But the co-operation which seems necessary at present, is not simply a friendly attitude or theory of work, but a positive and vital connection between the commission and outside forces, and between the commission and every library within its state. With a definite and intelligent study of co-operative possibilities and a willingness to merge commission activities with those of individual libraries, results should be unusual.

Frequently in library co-operation the popular conception of results seems to be based largely on a financial economy in the loan and use of books. Suggestions have been made which indicate a belief that a library field can be developed as a corporation would exploit an oil field. The trust methods of the business world, involving as they do the sacrifice of the individual plant for the benefit of centralized interests and supposed financial economy, cannot be used in this proposed commission co-operation, for in it, economy, if there be any, will accrue from better work

accomplished in the individual library for the same appropriation.

The trend which seems evident will not be so apparent in the newer commission states where library commission work will continue to take its usual course of blazing the way. There will be public library opinion to arouse and to guide when awake. New commissions will block out their work through legislation and then protect it from hostile attack. The establishment of public libraries and the construction of new buildings will continue to be of paramount importance. Every new library established, however, means so much work finished; and in commission states at present, libraries are springing into existence at a rate exceeding that at which towns become able to support them through increased property valuation. Fewer new libraries naturally mean fewer new buildings to construct and fewer untrained librarians to instruct, but they mean also, more opportunity and greater necessity for closer co-operation between commissions and the libraries they have helped to set going.

An increase in the number of public libraries in successful operation in a state will also affect the traveling libraries as well. Many years will elapse in most states before different methods in lending traveling libraries will be necessary, and no changes may be needed in some; but in states where public libraries in cities and towns are reaching out to county support and service as in California, and to township support and service as in Indiana, new adjustments must follow. These will be welcomed, not regretted by library commissions, for none should live for itself except as its existence is a benefit to libraries in general, and the township and county libraries sending out books within their own territory will have some decided advantages. A librarian in personal touch with her reading public, whether it embrace city or county, will have wide scope in selecting her books. Her personal touch will acquaint her with her public's exact needs and she will be better able to meet them. Traveling libraries circulated from a township or county cen-

ter will decrease their expense to most readers, but best of all they will mean another strong bond between the librarian and her people, and between a public and a local institution which stands for intelligence, progress and happiness.

Library commissions will continue to use traveling libraries as a first step in library organization, and to supply books to the thousands who lack all public library facilities; but the greatest care will have to be used in the future by commissions and state libraries in sending traveling libraries into public library territory. Central state offices have lent books in public library communities when the cost of postage to the reader has equaled the original purchase price of the book which should have been on the shelves of the local library in the first place. Commissions will continue to lend books to struggling libraries and to supply them with books too expensive for local purchase, but fewer officers, whether of the library commission or some other department of state will mistake competition for co-operation, and commit the professional sin of standing between any librarian and her public.

A cursory glance over library legislation for the last few years will show how library activities have become centralized more and more in the state-supported library institutions. One wonders whether this is because of a general desire among library workers of the state, or because the state legislators, with unexpected clear vision as to library needs, have agreed as to the advantages of such centralization, or because of personal pride and professional ambition in a state-supported office. Proper professional ambition is laudable, certain library legislation absolutely necessary, and no state institution needs more careful legislation for its existence than a library commission.

Its comparatively recent appearance in library affairs is responsible for the fact that many public officials do not thoroughly understand commission work. A library commission, separate from the state library, has no array of books, furniture and staff with which to impress a legislator

with the magnitude of its work; and aside from statistical information regarding the **circulation of traveling libraries** and of library visits made, the results of library commission work frequently must be intangible, at least, to some doubting Thomases who calls at the commission office.

A library commission can no more state what it has accomplished for libraries, than a board of health can specify the cases of typhoid fever it has prevented in a given time. Because of this limitation, legislation must be the backbone and frame which supports the commission body. But state libraries and commissions must avoid the danger of extending this backbone until it becomes a legislative shell, encasing the body to the detriment of growth, and so cumbering it that activity and flexibility become impossible. Successful library commissions cannot rely on a legislative "thou shalt and thou shalt not" in their relations with individual libraries, but must depend on a helpful, tactful attitude and service which result in a mutual feeling of perfect confidence.

A commission must be sufficiently effective to make itself the center of library activity in its state, and one which depends on legislation alone to gain this position, is in grave danger of being little more than a machine. In the work which is upon us no library commission or state library doing commission work can successfully devote its attention to admiring the oiled workings of its own machinery. While we may praise its frictionless movements and are impressed by the sound of mighty forces pent up within, let us recognize that in the hum of a legislatively constructed machine at least some of the noise may come from an exhaust pipe.

I believe that in the older commission states at least, necessary legislation applying to the central library office has nearly reached its maximum. Today there seems to be more interest in legislation which directly develops individual libraries throughout the state. Growth in the individual library from within is much to be preferred to hot-house forcing by applications of legislative steam heat from a great central plant.

Library commissions have always stood for increased efficiency on the part of the librarian, and they are tending more and more to stand also for increased consideration for the librarian. The call to overworked, underpaid librarians has been to strive for "love of the work," but commissions, while realizing the value of this attitude, are trying to place the work on a professional rather than a sentimental basis.

An awakened conscience is apparent, also, regarding the frequently neglected library trustee. During the coming year, one library commission has planned to hold trustees' institutes as distinct from librarians' institutes; and another commission is considering the advisability of regularly issuing a publication for the use of trustees.

While trend is not synonymous with revolution, and the development of library commission work doubtless will continue along general lines already laid down, the next few years should witness a wonderful growth in all commission states. It may be said in fairness that commissions have not been derelict in the duties imposed upon them in the past, but they themselves are recognizing that the methods of the past cannot be depended upon entirely for the future. The time has come for commissions to realize fully, as most public libraries are realizing, that technical training, buildings and even books themselves are but means to an end, and this end is more than the polishing of tools or of halos. It is the diminution of ignorance, unhappiness and isolation, through the broadening and quickening of life.

It is strange how a community and even an entire town may go on its way thinking and living as its founders did, frequently unconscious of the great uplifting forces at work all about. But it is not so strange after all when we remember that the protectors of public health, the conservators of our natural resources, the advocates of better municipal government, the beautifiers of cities, the guardians of neglected children, the workers in organized charities and juvenile courts—this host of un-

selfish, public spirited people—confine their work mainly to our larger cities and leave the smaller places neglected.

The librarian and her local board may realize the responsibility for making the library a vital force in the community, but too frequently they feel helpless to do this, for the great vitalizing influences seem too remote for availability. These influences fly high, but the library commissions propose to play the part of Franklins, and catch these forces which flash among the clouds and conduct their sparks to the small library bottles all over the state.

We have had library displays showing the wetness of water and the dryness of dust,—all helpful to the incredulous—but the library commission can co-operate with the state board of health, and through exhibits, speakers and books, join in the fight against disease and suffering. It can work with the state fish and game commission and increase the understanding and respect for animal life about us. Associated with the state board of forestry and with the state geologist, the commission can help libraries to teach the proper use of natural resources and how to protect them for future generations. Better ideas of home economics, of sanitary surroundings and of increasing the earnings from the farm will follow if library commissions will bring the state agricultural college with its varied resources into touch with the small community. Similarly, through co-operation with landscape artists and architects the commission can demonstrate the economy in beauty.

Whatever the agent, library commissions can co-operate with it and work through the individual library by means of popular lectures, public exhibitions and, best of all, by means of books. In any community the commission can use its traveling libraries to advantage, send pictures and books to supplement the local collection, select books for purchase by the library and act as a bureau of bibliography in compiling reading lists for public use when these duties cannot be performed by the local librarian. This last should be a most important work, for the

ordinary bibliography issued by the large library is no more adapted for use in the very small one than its building plans would be.

But not only can the commission co-operate with forces within the different states for the benefit of individual libraries and communities, it can join hands with many national agencies whose aims are similar. The Bureau of education at Washington or some other national office is losing splendid opportunities to co-operate with library commissions and with the League of library commissions by not keeping information to date regarding new library activities and conditions in each state. Unfortunately library co-operation of this kind in the past seems to have been confined chiefly to spasmodic collections of library statistics.

Although much work has been devoted to laying the foundations of library commission work, even greater perseverance and devotion will be required to realize all its possibilities. The success or failure of a commission will depend upon its ability to get behind the individual library and will be disclosed by library conditions throughout the particular state in which the commission's work and resources have been expended. My personal belief is that success will most easily be achieved by the commission which has the least official connection with or oversight of any single library in the state, so that undivided time, impartial attention and effort can be given to all public libraries of the state as a whole. Free from ambitions for any single institution but with unselfish loyalty to all, the future development of commission work should show more splendid results than ever marked the past. In the recent words of a library commission secretary, "we must now look forward to the period of perfecting, developing, spiritualizing. We must look for results in the finer culture of the community, in individual lives, in character, in a development of living conditions more worth while," through a vitalized co-operation which shall bring our libraries into touch with the great social regenerative forces of the land, and through them to the people.

**THE PRESIDENT:** The Chair announces as the members of the committee he was authorized to appoint, Mr N. D. C. Hodges, Mr F. P. Hill and Dr R. G. Thwaites.

We have time to hear one or two short reports. Will DR. RICHARDSON read the report of his Committee?

### **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Mr President, this Committee has had no business referred to it and has held no meeting. One rather special matter has been suggested for action by Mr Merrill, of the Newberry library,—the inducing of foreign publishers to say in the first volume of a book how many volumes the finished work will contain. The published record of the wish seems to be the only method of furthering the end and the record is, therefore, here made without further ceremony.

The matter of participation in the Brussels meeting next summer has been reported to you from the Executive board and will be specially presented at a later session.

The matter of further possible co-operation with foreign libraries in the matter of cataloging rules will also be referred to at a later session in the report of the Committee on catalog rules.

E. C. RICHARDSON

Chairman.

The report was adopted as read.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Are there any other reports?

**THE SECRETARY:** The report of the Committee on co-operation with the National education association and also that of the Committee on library administration have been submitted.

### **THE COMMITTEE ON CO-OPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

makes an informal report by letter to the effect that the course of action recommended by it to the N. E. A. and to the A. L. A. was adopted by both Associations. Professor J. Edward Banta, of Binghamton,